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Information Alert

From the National Agricultural Library



United States
Department of
Agriculture



Press Release — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Brian Norris, (301) 504-6778

FAX: (301) 504-5472; TTY: 504-6856

Internet: bnorris@nalusda.gov

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February 1994

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PRESS RELEASE — FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject contact:

Telephone: (301) 504-5248

FAX: (301) 504-7042; **TTY:** (301) 504-6856

Internet: msilva@nalusda.gov

Media contact: Brian Norris

Telephone: (301) 504-6778

FAX: (301) 504-5472; **TTY:** (301) 504-6856

Internet: bnorris@nalusda.gov

Howard Retires as NAL Director

Beltsville, MD — On February 3, 1994, Joseph H. Howard retired after 11 years as Director of the National Agricultural Library (NAL) and a 30-year career in federal government service.

Pamela André, NAL Associate Director for Automation, will be Acting NAL Director until Howard's replacement is selected.

André credits Howard with moving NAL toward the goal of becoming an "electronic library," a library whose collection can be accessed anywhere, at anytime and by anyone with a computer terminal.

"That is the vision toward which Joe has guided us during his years as NAL Director," André said. "He has left us a foundation of technology and networking expertise that will enable us to move more rapidly toward that goal.

"Internationally, Joe has guided the library into the forefront of activities aimed at strong cooperation with the agricultural libraries in many foreign countries," André said. "Through various agreements NAL is sharing and receiving agricultural information worldwide. Joe has been a pioneer and a world leader in the field of agricultural information. We hope we will be able to call on his expertise even as he moves into his active retirement years."

Prior to being named NAL Director in 1983, Howard held a number of positions of increasing responsibility at the Library of Congress (LC), completing his LC service as the Assistant Librarian for Processing Services from 1976-1983.

He also was Chief of the Cataloging Department for Washington University Libraries in St. Louis, as well as Associate Director of Public Services for the University of Colorado Libraries. From 1963 to 1965, he was a Peace Corps volunteer at the University of Malaya Library and Malayan Teachers College. Howard is a U.S. Army veteran.

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A native of Olustee, Oklahoma, Howard received his bachelors and masters degrees from the University of Oklahoma. In 1979, he was awarded the University of Oklahoma Library School Alumni Award for Outstanding Contributions to Librarianship and in 1985, the Melvil Dewey Medal from the American Library Association for creative professional achievement in librarianship. Howard received the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Superior Service Award in 1988 for his "leadership in the development, application, and transfer of advanced information technologies resulting in significant program benefits for USDA agencies and users of NAL services worldwide."

Howard is a member of the American Library Association (ALA) and serves on various ALA committees. Also, he was a member of the Board of Regents of the National Library of Medicine, the General Administration Board of the USDA Graduate School; and the Joint Council on Food and Agricultural Sciences.

In 1990, Howard was elected to a five-year term as the President of the International Association of Agricultural Information Specialists (IAALD).

The National Agricultural Library is an agency of the U.S. Department of Agriculture. It is the largest agricultural library in the world. With the Library of Congress and the National Library of Medicine, NAL is one of three national libraries of the United States.

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Subject contact:

Telephone: (301) 504-5248

FAX: (301) 504-7042; **TTY:** (301) 504-6856

Internet: msilva@nalusda.gov

Media contact: Brian Norris

Telephone: (301) 504-6778

FAX: (301) 504-5472; **TTY:** (301) 504-6856

Internet: bnorris@nalusda.gov

André Named Acting NAL Director

Beltsville, MD — Pamela Q.J. André, who has served in various library management positions with the federal government over a 25-year career, has been named Acting Director of the National Agricultural Library (NAL), replacing Joseph H. Howard who retired on February 3, 1994.

André had been NAL's Associate Director for Automation since 1984. During this time she guided NAL's efforts to apply electronic technology to library operations. In particular, she was instrumental in the success of the National Agricultural Text Digitizing Program, in which selected portions of the NAL collection are placed on compact discs and distributed to land-grant university libraries nationwide. She also worked to make NAL services and products available over the Internet.

"As the Associate Director for Automation, Pam has demonstrated her management abilities," said Dean Plowman, USDA's Acting Assistant Secretary, Science and Education, "We are confident that she will serve admirably as Acting Director of NAL."

Prior to joining NAL, André held a variety of positions at the Library of Congress (LC). As a computer systems analyst, she worked on the development of LC's bibliographic computer system. She was later the Assistant Chief of the MARC Editorial Division. In 1982, she was named to the management team for the LC Optical Disk Pilot Project.

She has served on the editorial boards of several library-related publications and is a member of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress Network Advisory Committee.

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André has a master's degree in library science from the University of Maryland. Her articles on library automation have appeared in numerous publications and she is a popular speaker on the uses of new electronic technologies in libraries.

The National Agricultural Library, with over 2.2 million volumes, is the largest agricultural library in the world. With the Library of Congress and the National Library of Medicine, NAL is one of three national libraries of the United States.

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PRESS RELEASE – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Subject contact:

Telephone: (301) 504-6503

FAX: (301) 504-5675; **TTY:** (301) 504-6856

Internet: cditzler@nalusda.gov

Media contact: Brian Norris

Telephone: (301) 504-6778

FAX: (301) 504-5472; **TTY:** (301) 504-6856

Internet: bnorris@nalusda.gov

NAL Commits to 'Electronic Library' Goal

Beltsville, MD – On January 1, 1995, the National Agricultural Library (NAL) will take a major step in its commitment to becoming an “electronic library.”

“On that date, electronic information becomes the ‘preferred medium’ for library materials in an all-out push to make NAL’s services and its collection available in various electronic formats worldwide,” said acting NAL Director Pamela André.

André said that NAL’s ultimate goal is to become “truly a library without walls, where our magnificent collection can be accessed by computer by anyone, anywhere and at anytime.”

According to André, NAL is making this commitment because of its belief that “the current paper-based information delivery system is inadequate to keep pace with the needs of the modern agriculturalist.”

The “electronic library” goal was set in an *Electronic Information Initiative – Phase I* undertaken by NAL as part of a strategic plan to guide NAL operations into the next century. The overall purpose of the initiative is to research, plan and implement a systematic program of managing data in electronic form.

“Phase I was a consideration of the issues associated with NAL’s ability to manage electronically created and stored information,” André said. “The final report recommends actions NAL must take in order to provide full electronic access to information in the increasingly networked agricultural community.”

André said NAL set the January 1, 1995, goal in a “statement of commitment” contained in the Phase I final report. In part, the statement says, “Increasingly, information is produced in digitized form, and with recent

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telecommunications innovations and the Internet, the resources available to the computer literate researcher are expanding exponentially... The NAL is taking the initiative in a systematic program of managing data in electronic form and establishing strategies for collecting, storing and distributing U.S. agricultural information in electronic form."

The statement ends, "To demonstrate its commitment to meeting the challenges of becoming an 'electronic library,' on January 1, 1995, the National Agricultural Library will designate electronic information the preferred medium."

Other steps NAL will take to achieve its electronic library goal are: tie in to electronic networks worldwide to provide "seamless access to information;" shift and add resources to acquire, process and make available electronic data; work closely with other world agencies and libraries to emphasize electronic information; and convert its own publications from print to electronic media.

Details of the NAL effort are contained in *The Electronic Information Initiative: Phase I Final Report: A Key Success Factor in the NAL Strategic Plan*. Copies of the report are available via anonymous FTP at "[cliff.nalusda.gov](ftp://cliff.nalusda.gov)" in the "/pub/elec.init" directory as filename "eii-rpt.txt". Copies are also available on 3 1/4" diskette by sending a blank formatted disk to:

Head, Document Delivery Services Branch
Attn: Electronic Initiative Diskettes
National Agricultural Library, Room 300
10301 Baltimore Boulevard
Beltsville, MD 20705-2351

"NAL cannot afford to ignore the flood of electronic advances taking place that we can use to serve our users more effectively," André said. "With this announcement we have committed ourselves to mastering information technology, to the benefit of U.S. and world agriculture."

NAL is one of three national libraries of the United States, with the Library of Congress and the National Library of Medicine. It is the largest agricultural library in the world.



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Public Affairs Office, Room 204
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